

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claim 3 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims as follows:

**Claim 1. (original)**

A baluster kit comprising:

- a) a base section having
  - (1) a proximal end adapted to be mounted on an upper surface of a stair,
  - (2) a fastener-accommodating hole defined in said base element through the proximal end of said base element,
  - (3) a fastener adapted to be accommodated in the fastener-accommodating hole and which is adapted to fasten said base to the stair when said base section is mounted on the stair, and
  - (4) a distal end;
- b) a central section having a first end connected to the distal end of said base section and a second end, the central section further including a longitudinal axis extending between the first end of said central section and the second end of said central section; and
- c) a distal section adapted to be mounted on said central section and including

- (1) a body having a first end, a second end, and a longitudinal axis extending between the first end of the body and the second end of the body, the longitudinal axis of the body being collinear with the longitudinal axis of said central section when said distal section is mounted on said central section,
- (2) a connecting element having a proximal end fixed to the body of said distal section at the second end of said distal section, and a distal end spaced apart from the second end of the body of said distal section, the connecting element having a longitudinal axis extending between the proximal end of the connecting element and the distal end of the connecting element, the longitudinal axis of the connecting element being collinear with the longitudinal axis of the body of said distal section when said distal section is in place on said central section, the connecting element being adapted to be connected to a rail associated with the stair and located above the stair to connect said distal section to the rail, and
- (3) a bore defined in the body of said distal section and extending along the longitudinal axis of the body of said distal section from the first end of the body of said distal section toward the second end of the body of said distal section, the bore being sized to snugly and releasably accommodate said central section adjacent to the second end of said central section when said

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distal section is mounted on said central section.

**Claim 2. (original)**

The baluster as described in claim 1 wherein said base section and said central section are of one-piece construction.

**Claim 3. (cancelled)**